

Strategies for Effective Teaching and Learning

Teaching Students With Physical or Health Disabilities

Recommended Classroom Adaptations

Students with physical and health disabilities often require adaptations to accommodate their specific disabilities. This can include adaptations to the environment, instructional materials, and teaching strategies. Some effective practices are as follows:

- Make classroom adaptations to accommodate students' mobility and seating needs (for example, widened aisles for wheelchairs, seating near side of room with view of board and access to computer, special desk).
- Use and properly arrange adaptations and assistive technology as determined by the special education teacher and educational team to provide access to the learning environment (for example, slant board and stabilization of material on desk, alternative keyboard, augmentative communication device, books and worksheets scanned into computer).
- Assist students with physical disabilities to participate as much as possible in classroom activities requiring a motor response (for example, bring needed items to student, help student manipulate materials, partner student with peer to assist each other with task).
- Use a variety of systematic instructional strategies that effectively address the student's individual learning needs (for example, learning strategies, content enhancement strategies, antecedent prompts, response prompts).
- Use specialized instructional strategies specifically developed for students with physical disabilities as appropriate (for example, teach students who are nonverbal to use internal speech to decode words as in the Nonverbal Reading Approach).
- Assist students who use augmentative forms of communication to learn to use their communication devices successfully across learning and social environments during the school day. Also, allow students to answer questions using their most reliable form of communication.
- Allow more time for the student to respond, take tests, or hand in assignments when oral or written communication is affected by his or her disability.
- Modify assignments or tests to accommodate the student's disability (for example, reduce paper tasks, break up assignments into shorter segments, alternate test or assignment format).
- Maintain a safe, healthy environment by observing for health-related problems and knowing the steps to take should a problem occur (for example, seizure, fatigue, medication side effects).